



Initiative 2 *Maintain and Improve Statewide*

The need for adequate flood management is more critical now than ever before.

Improve Flood Management

The need for adequate flood management is more critical now than ever before. California's Central Valley flood control facilities are deteriorating and, in some places, literally washing away. At the same time, the Central Valley's growing population is pushing new housing and job centers to areas that are particularly vulnerable to flooding. Yet, in recent years, funding to maintain and upgrade flood protection facilities has sharply declined. Compounding these challenges are recent court rulings that hold State and local agencies liable for flood-related damages when levees fail.

Flood management in the Central Valley needs an approach that will achieve both short-term and long-term solutions. This approach

should include a set of strategies that involve policy changes, program reforms, and funding proposals to better protect California from the devastating consequences and economic impacts caused by floods. These strategies include: improved maintenance, system rehabilitation, better emergency response, sustainable funding for flood management programs, better flood mapping and public education. Legislative and constitutional actions may include stronger flood insurance requirements, a Central Valley flood control assessment district, and a reduction in taxpayer exposure for funding flood disaster claims. These actions will ensure that people who choose to live or work in floodplains are aware of the hazards, pay for flood protection systems, and bear the consequences of floods.

Flood management cannot occur in isolation; whenever possible it must be integrated with other objectives such as ecosystem restoration, farmland protection, and other multi-objective management of floodplains.

This initiative includes physical facilities and statewide water management programs.

Water Management Systems

Sustain the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the hub of California water management and aquatic ecosystems. Public and private entities carry out myriad activities to maintain the benefits that California derives from this great estuary: the State Water Resources Control Board sets water quality standards; the State Water Project and Central Valley Project operate to meet these standards; federal, state, and private entities preserve land as habitat; farmers till 500,000 productive acres.

The common denominator among all these pursuits is the Delta levee system. These levees protect water supplies needed for the environment, agriculture, and urban uses. Delta levees also protect roadways, cities, towns, agricultural lands, as well as terrestrial and aquatic habitat. The CALFED Delta levee program is intended to reduce the risk to land use and associated economic activities, water supply, infrastructure, and the ecosystem from catastrophic breaching of these levees.

Despite their importance, there are many factors that make it quite challenging to sustain the Delta levees and the benefits they protect. Subsidence of Delta islands continues to occur where peat soils oxidize, increasing the pressure on levees that protect the islands. A catastrophic earthquake in or near the Delta might cause multiple levee failures that would draw seawater into the Delta, rendering the water unfit for irrigation or human consumption until levees were repaired and seawater was flushed from the Delta. Climate change is causing sea levels to rise and may also increase the magnitude of flood flows. Maintenance and improvement of Delta levees is costly, and available funds have not kept pace with needs. Levee

failures are extremely costly to repair, further burdening the ability to fund adequate maintenance and rehabilitation.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, like the Central Valley flood control system, needs an approach that will achieve both short-term and long-term solutions. This approach should maintain the services and values we get from the Delta and should be sustainable over the long term. DWR has initiated a multi-year study to assess ongoing and future risks to the Delta, identify consequences of levee failures, evaluate alternative risk reduction strategies, and develop a plan for future action.



The levee system of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta protects water supplies needed for the environment, agriculture, and urban uses.